

On rollcall vote No. 495 I would have voted "yes."

On rollcall vote No. 496 I would have voted "no."

On rollcall vote No. 497 I would have voted "yes."

On rollcall vote No. 498 I would have voted "yes."

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MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND  
VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIA-  
TIONS ACT, 2008

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SPEECH OF

**HON. MICHAEL D. CASTLE**

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 15, 2007*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2642) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes:

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to H.R. 2638, the Fiscal Year 2008 Homeland Security Appropriations Act.

The tragic terrorist attacks of 2001, and the destruction resulting from Hurricane Katrina in 2005, made clear that we must improve our nation's ability to prepare for and respond to disasters. In the days and weeks following these events, the United States Congress acted quickly to provide our Nation's first-responders with the resources and equipment they need to ensure our security.

The bill before us today provides critical resources for vital national security requirements, including increased border patrol agents, port security improvements, and grants for America's firefighters. Still, although continued funding for such important programs is essential, it is obvious that increased spending alone cannot solve every problem.

Since its creation in 2002, the Department of Homeland Security has at times suffered from wasteful spending decisions and business management shortcomings. Unfortunately, this legislation fails to correct many of these deficiencies—and instead would boost

funding levels well above what experts at the Department have requested.

In 2004, the 9/11 Commission also characterized the federal focus on aviation security following the 2001 terrorist attacks as "fighting the last war," and noted that "opportunities to do harm are as great, or greater, in maritime or surface transportation." In the wake of attacks on subway trains in London and on passenger rail lines in Madrid and Mumbai, it is clear that terrorist organizations are intent on disrupting surface transportation systems and mass transit around the world. Despite the 9/11 Commission's warning, the legislation before us today continues to provide billions for aviation security, while failing to prioritize rail and transit spending.

Mr. Chairman, it is our duty to make certain that we have an effective national security system, capable of ensuring the safety of all Americans. I am concerned that H.R. 2638 fails to adequately achieve this goal and I look forward to working with my colleagues to improve this bill as we move forward with the legislative process.